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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

21 June 1968

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Arrest of Dissident Political Group at University of Sofia

A group of teachers recently formed a dissident political group at the University of Sofia, [REDACTED]

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In criticizing the present regime of Todor Zhivkov as revisionist the group apparently claimed to take its inspiration from Dimitur Blagoev and Georgi Dimitrov, the founders of the Bulgarian CP. The group was uncovered by the authorities in mid-May, however, and over 100 of the dissidents were arrested. About 400 others were deported to the provinces. Of those arrested, 40 reportedly still remain in jail.

[REDACTED] Although it seems certain that unrest does exist in Bulgaria, the police are dealing with it quickly and effectively. [REDACTED]

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East Germans Continue to Harass Berlin Travelers

The East Germans continue to chip away at West German and Allied presence in Berlin. On 19 June, US military personnel in uniform but off duty were detained for nearly two hours in two separate incidents in East Berlin. Both incidents stemmed from the soldiers inadvertently driving their privately-owned vehicles into an unauthorized area abutting an East German military site. Repeated requests for a Soviet officer were ignored by the East German security personnel who detained the men.

When the Mission protested the incidents to the Soviet protocol officer on 20 June, he said that he could not accept the protest "as such" but only as "information and request." Since only Americans and East Germans were involved, he said, he could only pass the information along. Possibly related to this "change" in procedures was an intercepted conversation between two SED party functionaries on 20 June.

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Red tape has also been increased for travelers transiting the GDR. On 19 June East German checkpoint personnel began charging two West Marks for every notation on a visa caused by a change of route or the number of minors involved. For example, if a traveler goes to Berlin via the Helmstedt autobahn and returns by way of the Frankfurt autobahn his visa must be changed. Similarly, if a traveler takes a child from Berlin to the Federal Republic but leaves the child with relatives and returns alone his visa must be altered.

For their part the West Germans also are adding to the processing procedures. West German checkpoint personnel began issuing reimbursement chits which travelers are required to fill out in order to receive Federal reimbursement for the numerous East German charges. This facet of processing may add to tie-ups during peak traffic hours.

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Rumanian Acting Foreign Minister Visits Israel

Rumanian Acting Foreign Minister Macovescu is slated to visit Israel during 21-23 June.

According to an Israeli diplomat, Macovescu will meet with Israeli Foreign Minister Eban and perhaps with Prime Minister Eshkol. Macovescu's trip is doubtlessly part of Rumania's effort to moderate Arab-Israeli tensions. During 7-10 June, he was in Cairo, where he held extensive talks with UAR Foreign Minister Riyad. Macovescu is a highly skilled negotiator.

The visits to Cairo and Tel Aviv dramatize Bucharest's freedom of maneuver in world affairs. Rumania is the only Eastern European Communist country which did not break off diplomatic relations with Israel following last summer's Arab-Israeli war.

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The timing of the visit to Israel also clearly reflects Bucharest's efforts to "balance" its foreign contacts. The Rumanians currently have observers at the Budapest meeting of Communist parties, Macovescu in Tel Aviv, and Deputy Premier Birladeanu heading a high-level, 10-man technical-scientific delegation on a three-week tour of the US.

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Czechoslovak Students Petition For Diplomatic Relations With Israel

Representatives from the Student Parliament of the Philosophical Faculty at Charles University in Prague on 20 June petitioned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to restore diplomatic relations with Israel. Students parading outside the ministry carried placards which claimed that over 13,000 people had signed the petition. The students also tipped off the US Embassy that they would take this action.

The students' petition again illustrates the popular feeling that the present government should undo the work of the Novotny regime, which broke relations with Israel after the June 1967 War. The Foreign Ministry has modified its stance since January, declaring it recognizes and respects the existence of all Middle East states, including Israel, but has thus far rejected restoring relations until Israel accepts the UN Security Council resolution of November 1967 and withdraws from Arab territory.

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Albanian Party Reorganization

The Albanian Workers Party (AWP) is expanding the role and importance of the basic party organizations. This reorganization is apparently designed not only to rejuvenate the party apparatus, but also to increase the role and activity of the workers in the party.

The full extent of the reorganization is unclear. Presumably, it will eventually eliminate many or all of the district level party organs. In any event, the move apparently means the loss of jobs for some party functionaries. The 30 May issue of Zeri i Popullit, for example, reveals that

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the regional party secretary of Tepelene was released from his post and "voluntarily" became the chairman of a collective farm. [REDACTED]

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Prague Maintains Pressure On US To Return Gold

The Czechoslovaks have continued their running press commentary on the issue of the return by the US of the sequestered Czechoslovak gold, this time by linking the issue with Washington's announcement that Czechoslovak citizens are eligible for social security payments.

The main party daily, Rude Pravo, on 19 June cited British press speculation that the US decision on social security opened the path to negotiations on the gold issue. Apparently citing the London Times, Rude Pravo added that the solution of the social security issue removed one of the economic problems standing in the way of improved political relations.

The gold issue has long been a major sticking point in US-Czechoslovak relations. The State Department has insisted that the question of the US returning the gold is directly connected with the issue of Prague reimbursing the US for property seized after 1948. Ambassador Beam, however, has recently recommended that the US return the gold as a gesture of good will. [REDACTED]

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Rumanian Foreign Minister To Visit Morocco

Rumanian Foreign Minister and President of the 22nd UN General Assembly, Corneliu Manescu, is slated to pay a state visit to Morocco during 25-28 June. This will be his first visit to Rabat. The trip reflects Rumania's desire to cultivate ties with "third world" countries. [REDACTED]

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NOTE: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE DIVISION

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